



December 2015

the wyoming game and fish department

CODY REGION newsletter

Swift fox sighting

Swift foxes documented northwest of Worland



Three swift foxes documented approximately 20 miles northwest of Worland.

Worland Biologist Bart Kroger documented three swift foxes in early November about 20 miles northwest of Worland. These are only the second documented swift fox to ever occur in the Bighorn Basin. The species were first documented in the area in 2012 when a single swift fox was sighted at the Worland airport.

Swift foxes are considered a species of greatest conservation need and are legally classified as nongame in Wyoming. Nongame Program Supervisor Zack Walker said until recently, swift fox populations were thought to occur only in the eastern half of the state. Recent documentation near Worland and Farson however calls this into question. If funding is secured, Game and Fish nongame biologists will continue population monitoring efforts of swift fox in the eastern half of the state. This work could begin as early as fall 2016. Biologists also hope to initiate research efforts in the western half of the state to help determine the species distribution. "These efforts will help us connect the dots and better understand swift fox distribution and abundance in the state," Walker said.

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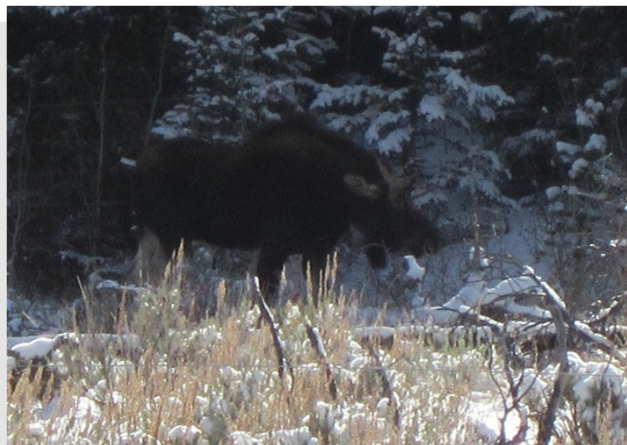


serving the Bighorn Basin

On the ground

Moose on the loose

A young male moose in Shell that was causing headaches for homeowners was darted and relocated recently. The moose was chemically immobilized with the aid of a dart gun, then loaded into a trailer and released near Porcupine Ranger Station. Greybull Biologist Leslie Schreiber said the whole operation went off without a hitch.



Kyle Bales with a chemically immobilized moose in Shell.

Game and Fish personnel responded to a report of a moose trapped inside an aspen enclosure in Aspen Creek in the Grass Creek area. The moose had been inside the enclosure for at least a couple of days, and was not very interested in leaving. After several hazing attempts, the very agitated bull moose was finally driven out of the enclosure.

Boat docks at Sunshine Reservoirs removed from water

Anglers are advised that the boat docks at Upper and Lower Sunshine Reservoirs west of Meeteetse have been pulled out of the water.

Habitat and Access Supervisor Brad Sorensen said that the docks are pulled out of the water every winter so they do not sustain damage from ice. "Pulling the docks during the winter lengthens the life of the dock," Sorensen said. "The docks will be placed back in the water as soon as ice off occurs in the spring and water levels rise. This spring, anglers can look forward to using a new dock at Upper Sunshine Reservoir similar in design to the dock in Lower Sunshine."



Game and Fish personnel use a winch to pull a boat dock out of the water at Lower Sunshine Reservoir.

Behind the Badge

Illegal guiding

North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane finalized an illegal guiding/outfitting case last month when Russell Stockie of Cody had a change of plea hearing. Stockie pleaded guilty to two counts of guiding /outfitting without a license, was ordered to pay \$5,080 in fines and will lose big game hunting privilege for the next three years.

Trespassing hunters take trophy deer

Recently, Greybull Game Warden Bill Robertson confiscated the head of trophy white-tailed deer that was harvested on private land by trespassing hunters. Initially the landowner did not want to pursue court action against the hunters as long as they made some attempt to make contact and apologize. Although Robertson advised the hunters of the landowner's good will, a month passed and no contact was made with the landowner by the suspects. The landowner is now requesting that a citation be written against the hunter.



White-tailed deer taken by trespassing hunters.

Not a good role model

Lovell Game Warden James Hobbs reports that November was active for enforcement. One notable case involved a father and his 13-year-old son from California. The father purchased a license for himself and one for his 16-year-old son that was unable to come on the hunting trip. The father said he didn't want a perfectly good license to go to waste, so he had his 13-year-old son shoot a buck.

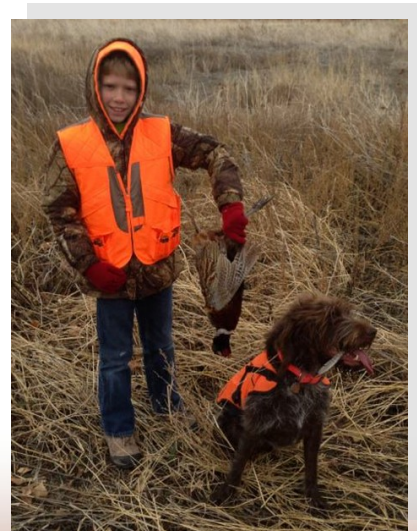
Hobbs contacted the pair as they were dragging the un-gutted deer to their truck and knew something was amiss when the 5'7" 13-year-old didn't match the 6'1" 185 pound description on the license. The father was cited for accessory to take a deer without a license and accessory for transfer of license. The father received \$1,280 in fines and lost hunting privileges for six months.

Of interest

Pheasant hunting on Yellowtail

Pheasant season began last month with lots of hunters taking advantage of the stocked birds at Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management area. There have been many wild birds harvested in addition to the released birds. It appears that game birds are doing as well as ever.

Right: Kolby Parker with a pheasant harvested on Yellowtail last season.



On the water

Anglers encouraged to be safe on the ice

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department advises anglers to use extreme caution while venturing out ice fishing, especially during the early season and during warmer winter temperatures. Ice on many waters may not be safe.



An ice fisherman pulls his equipment across the snow covered ice on Buffalo Bill Reservoir last winter.

For safe fishing, ice should be at least four inches thick. Anglers should take special efforts to check the thickness of the ice every 100 to 150 feet. Avoid fissures in the ice and significant sized cracks that can emerge in a lake. Clear ice is stronger than cloudy or white ice, which has frozen, thawed and re-frozen and is not always stable. White ice can also be from air bubbles or frozen snow and is much weaker than clear ice. For white ice, double the recommended thickness.

Fluctuating water levels in reservoirs and wind impact ice conditions and can create dangerous ice conditions. Be aware of recent weather conditions and temperatures and scout out the lake you wish to fish for overflow, wet areas, and open water. With variable ice conditions across the Bighorn Basin and rapidly changing conditions, anglers are urged to call the Cody Region Game and Fish office at 307-527-7125 for local current ice conditions.



An ice fisherman on Lower Sunshine Reservoir.